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RIVER ROUGE

Plea deal gets man probation for making a toddler smoke

January 16, 2008

By ZLATI MEYER

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

In a deal that is being questioned by some in law enforcement, a River Rouge man pleaded guilty to giving tobacco to a 3-year-old boy last month, netting the man a sentence of probation.

Felipe Francisco Garcia, 18, was sentenced to 6 months probation for the misdemeanor, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said Tuesday.

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He was initially charged with second-degree child abuse, as well, but according to Worthy, it couldn't be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. That charge was dropped.

A videotape released by the River Rouge Police Department shows the youngster smoking what looked like marijuana. The jarring images have generated some criticism about the plea deal.

"Our duty is to put people in jail and it just puts a bad taste in our mouths," River Rouge Police Chief Robert Alderman said. "We're OK with their decision. We'll continue to do our best. ... It's kind of disturbing to wonder if this will lead to a not-so-good future for the child."

Worthy said her office doesn't make a plea agreement without discussing it with police.

"I certainly understand people watching the tape and being upset," Worthy said. "We're upset. We have children. One thing we're very passionate about here is child abuse. ... We tried to make the child-abuse charge work and it didn't. He pled to what we could prove."

Garcia's attorney, Dawn Marie Tucker-Davis, could not be reached for comment.

"We could never prove at any time that the substance, which looks like it was being smoked and may have been, was marijuana," Worthy said, adding that no physical evidence existed.

River Rouge detectives obtained the undated videotape during an unrelated investigation of Garcia, which Alderman refused to discuss.

On Dec. 18, police arrested Garcia and the child's mother, who had an outstanding warrant, the chief said. The boy was placed with Child Protective Services.

Contact **ZLATI MEYER** at 313-223-4439 or meyer@freepress.com.

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Toddler pulled from pond

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

JAMESTOWN TOWNSHIP -- A 2-year-old boy pulled from the water at a construction company was rushed to Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus and remained in critical condition after Tuesday's 2 p.m. emergency call. The toddler was pulled from a pond on the grounds of Kamps Construction at 306 Ransom St. SW by a baby sitter, Ottawa County sheriff's Sgt. Mike Bagladi said. The sitter plucked the unidentified boy from the water and began resuscitation attempts. The boy was breathing when paramedics arrived, Bagladi said. A home, owned by Henry Kamps, is at the same address, and people there declined to comment.

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Published January 16, 2008



(Photo by Jeremy Herliczek/Lansing State Journal)
Opening statements: Robin Terence Wood (left) and his defense attorney John Frawley listen to opening statements Tuesday by Assistant Prosecutor Bill Crino. Wood is accused of criminal sexual conduct involving three children.

What's Next

- The trial for Robin Terence Wood, 60, of Lansing, reconvenes in Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield's courtroom at 8:30 a.m. Thursday. He is accused of sexually assaulting or molesting three children attending or visiting his wife's home day care business as far back as 2004. The girls are now 5, 6 and 11 years old. Wood faces up to life in prison if found guilty of the six counts of criminal sexual conduct.

Doctor says girl detailed sex abuse

Lansing man, 60, faces six charges as trial begins

Susan Vela
Lansing State Journal

Robin Terence Wood was known as "Papa Robin" to the kids at Mary's Quality Daycare on the south side of Lansing.

A young girl who at one time attended Wood's wife's home day care business has told medical staff that "Papa Robin" touched her "privacy."

More than once.

"She gave a fairly clear history of being molested," Sparrow Hospital's Dr. Stephen Guertin testified

Tuesday before an Ingham County jury, providing details of an interview with the child.

Wood, 60, could spend the rest of his life in prison if found guilty of one first-degree criminal sexual conduct (CSC) charge.

A jury of 10 women and four men is considering a total of six CSC charges, two of them first-degree and four of them second-degree.

Wood was charged in February after a parent notified authorities of possible crimes at the 5015 Kessler Drive center, which has lost its license.

Three children - whom Wood is accused of sexually assaulting or molesting from as far back as 2004 - are at the heart of the case.

During opening statements Tuesday, assistant prosecutor Bill Crino said Wood touched the girls inappropriately.

For example, Crino said that Wood once slipped his hand down a child's pants and rubbed the child's buttocks.

"This is a case about relationships, and it's about exploitation, and it's about sexual assault," Crino told the jury.

"That relationship of trust was shattered."

2 children testify

The girls now are 5, 6 and 11 years of age.

Two of them testified without any news media or other observers in the courtroom.

Their mothers also took the witness stand, describing their daughters' behavior while at Mary's Quality Daycare.

One, requesting anonymity, said that Mary Wood would do fun things with the kids and take them on outings.

The two moms described Robin Terence Wood as someone who generally was at the day care facility.

Defense attorney John Frawley has said Wood, a General Motors Corp. retiree now free on bond, assisted in caring for the day care children.

Sometimes, Frawley said in his opening statements, that meant Wood applied cream to their bodies because of inflamed, itchy skin.

'Appropriate reasons'

"He did not at any point ever touch them with any thought in mind for the purposes of sexual arousal or gratification," Frawley said. "When it was done, it was done for appropriate purposes, for appropriate reasons.

"The third reason that they're not going to be able to meet their burden of proof is because of the fact there is no physical evidence whatsoever. You will see nothing."

The children's "unreliable" testimony and a "prejudiced" interview involving a Lansing police officer and Robin Terence Wood were the other reasons Frawley provided.

The trial is supposed to last about a week.

The Woods are likely to testify.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com.

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Hillman man enters no contest pleas in CSC case - *by Jim Young*

Montmorency County Press

January 16, 2008

Gilbert E. Novotny, of Hillman, entered no contest pleas for two counts of second degree criminal sexual conduct with a child under age 13 in 26th Circuit Court on Monday. Following the hearing, Novotny was remanded to the custody of the Sheriff's Department. Sentencing in the case is scheduled for Feb. 25.

In November, the former Hillman School bus driver was charged with ten counts of criminal sexual conduct, involving three children under age 13. At that time the Montmorency County Sheriff's Department issued a letter to parents on his bus route indicating that none of the charges stemmed from his duties as a bus driver.

Ann Arbor News

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Exec faces new child-porn charges

An Ann Arbor business executive accused of molesting boys he met through the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Washtenaw County has been charged with possession of child pornography, officials said.

Prosecutors charged Michael John Brooks, 46, with four counts of possession of child sexually abusive material. Brooks is a vice president and chief compliance officer for Sigma Financial Corp. in Ann Arbor.

Washtenaw County Sheriff's Cmdr. Dave Egeler said deputies discovered child pornography on a computer disk seized during the molestation investigation. In November, Brooks was charged with four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. He is accused of assaulting boys between the ages of 8 and 16 during a 12-year span dating back to 1995.

Brooks' attorney has denied the allegations.

Brooks is scheduled for a preliminary examination today on the original sexual assault charges and is expected to be arraigned then on the child pornography charges, which are punishable by up to four years in prison.

DETROIT

Boy's 911 call marked as prank

'She hung up on me,' he testifies at dispatchers' trial

January 16, 2008

By BEN SCHMITT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The first 911 call was coded by operators as "pk" for prank.

The second call, three hours later, was coded "family trouble."

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On both occasions, a 46-year-old woman lay unconscious in her nightgown on the floor of her Detroit apartment as her 5-year-old son tried to get help. And on neither call did dispatchers request EMS.

On the first call, 911 dispatcher Sharon Nichols, 45, told the boy, Robert Turner, "I'm gonna send the police to your house and find out what's going on with you." Then she hung up, according to transcripts. She never requested any action.

Only after the second call and a scolding did 911 operator Terri Sutton, 48, request a police response. Police arrived and found Sherrill Turner dead. They then called for EMS assistance. It was later learned that Turner died of an enlarged heart.

But before calling police, Sutton told Robert: "You shouldn't be playing on the phone," and "Now put her on the phone before I send the police out there to knock on your door and you're going to be in trouble."

Both operators are on trial in Detroit's 36th District Court, charged with misdemeanor counts of willful neglect of duty in connection with the Feb. 20, 2006, phone calls at 5:59 p.m. and 9:02 p.m. They face up to a year in jail if convicted.

Robert, now 7, dressed in a Spider-Man T-shirt, testified Tuesday that he put his hands on his mother's chest and didn't feel a heartbeat. He said he called 911.

"She hung up on me," Robert said. "She said, 'Stop playing on the phone.' "

When Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Lora Weingarden asked him how the operator treated him, the boy replied, "Not good."

E.J. Reeves, who supervises the 911 call center in Detroit, testified that if a child calls in and says his or her mother has passed out, then EMS should be requested before police.

She also testified operators are trained to "assume any call that comes in is an emergency."

Sutton's lawyer, David Lee, contended in his opening statement that his client called police, proving she did not ignore the boy.

Nichols' lawyer, Cornelius Pitts, told jurors that Robert's mother already was dead when the call came in. He said the trial will expose flaws in Detroit's 911 system and that the city is trying to scapegoat the dispatchers.

"It was a rush to judgment based on this city administration's cowardice, ineptness, their interest in saving their own hides, to blame the operators," Pitts said.

Contact **BEN SCHMITT** at 313-223-4296 or bschmitt@freepress.com.

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Officer in 911 case testifies about finding woman unconscious

2 operators are accused of neglecting their duties in mom's death

January 16, 2008

BY BEN SCHMITT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The radio run for Detroit Police Officer Jill Browning was a “kid playing on the phone, calling 911.”

But when Browning arrived to the apartment on Spruce Street on Feb. 20, 2006, she found a 5-year-old boy playing video games and his mother lying unconscious in her bedroom dressed in a nightgown.

Advertisement

Browning testified this morning in 36th District Court during a jury trial against Detroit 911 operators Terri Sutton, 48, and Sharon Nichols, 45.

Both operators are charged with misdemeanor counts of willful neglect of duty in connection with the Feb. 20, 2006, phone calls at 5:59 p.m. and 9:02 p.m. They face up to a year in jail if convicted.

Browning arrived after Sutton requested police, coding the call as “family trouble.” She found 46-year-old Sherrill Turner dead and called for EMS assistance. It was later learned that Turner died of an enlarged heart.

Browning testified that the way the call came in made it a low priority, but she was on patrol and responded within five minutes.

She said she told Robert to continue to play his video games in another room while she handled the situation.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Lori Weingarden rested her case just before the lunch break and defense attorneys are expected to begin presenting their evidence this afternoon.

Judge Paula Humphries is presiding over the trial.

Nichols is accused of dismissing Robert's first calls as a prank and hanging up on him.

Sutton is accused of scolding him and ignoring protocol by requesting police instead of EMS after Robert said his mom had passed out.

E.J. Reeves, a supervisor at the Detroit 911 office, testified this morning that Sutton should have sent EMS to the home.

Reeves also explained that 911 operators take emergency calls and make requests for assistance. But dispatchers actually send the appropriate entities to the scenes.

She said the 911 call center has problems with prank calls but added that no prank calls ever came from the Turner apartment on Spruce Street.

Defense attorney Cornelius Pitts is defending Nichols and David Lee is representing Sutton.

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Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Boy: 911 operator 'hung up on me'

7-year-old testifies that a 'mean woman' thought he was playing when he requested help for stricken mom.

Doug Guthrie / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- After hearing no heartbeat when he put his ear to his unconscious mother's chest, 7-year-old Robert Turner testified Tuesday that he dialed 911 for help, but a "mean woman" answered the call.

"She hung up on me. She said I was playing on the phone," said the boy, who was 5 years old on Feb. 20, 2006, when his mother Sherrill Lynn Turner, 46, died of a heart attack in their Detroit apartment.

Detroit Emergency Services Operators Sharon Nichols, 43, and Terri Sutton, 47, are on trial in 36th District Court on charges of willful neglect of duty for allegedly mishandling two calls from the youth.

The operators thought the boy's calls were a prank. Police sent to the house after the second call to chastise the youth -- three hours after his first call -- radioed for medical help when they found his mother unresponsive on the kitchen floor.

Nichols and Sutton were suspended from their jobs and face up to a year in jail if convicted of the misdemeanor charges. The case also may set a precedent for the level of responsibility expected from civilians doing work that traditionally has been performed by police officers sworn to protect citizens.

As the trial began Tuesday, a lawyer for Nichols told jurors that the mother already was dead, so the response of the 911 emergency operators made no difference.

"It was a rush to judgment based on this city administration's cowardice, ineptness, their interest in saving their own skins, to blame the operators," said Cornelius Pitts.

The boy wore a Spider-Man T-shirt for his appearance in Judge Paula Humphries' courtroom Tuesday. He lives with his older sister and told the court he is doing well in second grade. Attorneys for Sutton and Nichols told jurors that up to half of the calls 911 operators receive are pranks.

Sutton's lawyer, David Lee, said his client had taken prior prank calls from children on the same street as the Turner address. Robert testified Tuesday that he had never dialed 911 before attempting to get help for his mother.

Lawyers for the operators also warned jurors that recordings of the 911 conversation might not seem nice or polite. Nichols is alleged to have told Robert to put his mother on the phone, despite being told by Robert that his mother was dead.

The call lasted 43 seconds before Nichols hung up.

When Robert called again, three hours later, Sutton is alleged during a 1-minute, 16-second call to have threatened to send a police officer to the house to discipline him. When two officers arrived at the home looking for Robert, Sherrill Turner was found unresponsive on the kitchen floor.

You can reach Doug Guthrie at (734) 462-2674 or dguthrie@detnews.com.

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Teen's arrest startles neighbors

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

By Danielle Quisenberry

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Neighbors of a 15-year-old boy charged in the brutal assault of a 14-year-old female Leslie High School student said they were startled to hear of his arrest.

"It surprises me it was them," Clint Martinez said of the family that lives a few houses down from him on Meeker Street, not far from downtown Leslie.

"I haven't had a problem with any of them at all."

Jarod Anthony Marshall, a Leslie freshman, was arraigned last week on a charge of assault with intent to murder, a felony punishable by up to life in prison.

The Ingham County Sheriff's Office refused to release the name of the teen because he is a juvenile. The Citizen Patriot obtained his name through court records.

County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Linda Maloney said Marshall is being charged as an adult, but would not say why nor elaborate on the case.

Marshall's preliminary examination is scheduled for Jan. 24 in Ingham County District Court.

Marshall is accused of assaulting Mary Pulliam, 14, before school Jan. 8, leaving her with injuries so severe Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth called her condition the worst he has seen someone survive.

She was listed in good condition Tuesday, a Sparrow Hospital spokesman said.

Mary Pulliam's father, Walter Pulliam, said Sunday he knows of Marshall, but does not know much about the boy.

Some students had opinions of the teen.

"He gets mad very easily," said Cheryl Hatfield, 15, a freshman and friend of Mary Pulliam.

A woman who answered the door at Marshall's home on Tuesday declined to comment.

People who live close by said the family, which lives in a modest, two-story structure with a front lawn littered with bicycles Tuesday, keeps to itself.

Martinez said he once sold a car to a member of the household, but did not know the family well. "The dad seems like a really nice guy," he said.

He said he was amazed an arrest was made so close to his home.

The assault itself didn't surprise him so much, he said. "This happens, even in small towns like this."

Still, many were "floored" by it and there has been much talk in the community, he said.

“It's kind of a bad situation,” said Donna Stephens, who lives across the street from Marshall's home and said she's heard many rumors. It concerned her to learn of the nearby arrest, she said.

“It's just terrible,” she said.

-- Staff Writer Chad Livengood contributed to this report.

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They're young, in love and missing

VIENNA TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

By Bryn Mickle

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VIENNA TWP. - A modern-day Romeo and Juliet are the subjects of a nationwide search after they ran away from home early Saturday in a stolen minivan.

This morning, investigators said a tip has led them to believe California is now the couple's most likely destination.

"We have reason to believe they may be in the area of Huntington Beach southwest of Santa Ana on the coastline in Orange County, California," said Genesee County Sheriff's Capt. Chris Swanson.

Hannah McConnell, 13, and her boyfriend, Gage Petherbridge, 15, left notes and journal entries saying they were running away together and have not called home since, their mothers said.

Gage's mother, Mary Wismer, said she awoke about 9:20 a.m. Saturday to find her son, her minivan, and his cocker spaniel, Mandy, gone.

Gage also had taken clothing, some food and his Xbox 360 video game system, Wismer said.

Soon after she realized he was gone, Wismer said, police arrived and said Hannah's parents had just reported her missing.

Wismer said her son, a ninth-grader at Clio High School, left a note apologizing for running away and promised to call.

"My son is very much in love with Hannah," Wismer said.

Hannah's mother, Julie, said her daughter "believes the world revolves" around them.

But Julie McConnell said she is even more worried because Hannah is bi-polar and left her medicine behind. Hannah is an eighth-grader at Carter Middle School.

McConnell said Hannah took \$100 from her purse when she left, and Wismer believes Gage has about \$580 in cash he got for Christmas.

Neither mother knows where the two were headed, but a journal entry from Hannah mentioned Washington state, said McConnell.

Gage has had his learner's permit since June and had only one more class to take before getting his license when he turns 16, she said. He is a very cautious driver, she said, and had logged about 15 hours of night driving.

"I don't know where they're headed," said McConnell.

Neither teen has run away before, the moms said.

The teens had not called home as of this morning.

A missing persons report was filed with the Genesee County Sheriff's Department, and their names have been entered in a national database.

The white 1997 Pontiac Montana transport van, license plate number 6DYW54, is also in a police database in the event the pair is stopped for a traffic violation.

Wismer said she has also given "missing" posters to truckers to put in truck stops in and outside of the state.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Genesee County Sheriff's Department at (810) 257-3406.

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Niles Daily Star

ONLINE EDITION

[Print Page](#)

Niles officer arrested

By ERIKA PICKLES / Niles Daily Star
Tuesday, January 15, 2008 10:44 AM EST

NILES - On Thursday, Jan. 10 around 10 p.m., Michigan State Police, Niles post, responded to a 911 call of a possible domestic dispute between a husband and wife.

Upon arrival, troopers arrested Niles City Police officer Chris Clark for domestic violence against his wife, Victoria, according to Lt. Michael Brown of the Michigan State Police.

Brown added that no weapons were used and that Clark, 36, was taken to the Berrien County Jail in St. Joseph, where he was lodged. Capt. James Merriman said Clark posted a \$1,000 bond the next morning.

Merriman said Clark, an eight-year veteran who joined the department in September 1999, has been suspended with pay, pending an internal investigation.

A case trial has been scheduled for Friday, according to the records department at the court house.

Victim was terrified of her husband, records show

Tue, Jan 15, 2008

BY CHRIS EPPLETT

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Lori DeKleine was aware of the danger signs around her.



"I have become increasingly terrified and afraid for my life," she wrote in a personal protection order filed in Ottawa County Circuit Court on Jan. 31, 2007, against her husband, Holland police officer Ken DeKleine.

Less than one year later, Lori, 43, was found strangled to death Thursday night in her basement of her home in the 200 block of Calvin Avenue in Holland.

"This case clearly is a result of domestic situations that have been ongoing," said Ottawa County Sheriff Gary Rosema in a press release.

In the protection order, Lori DeKleine cites three specific incidents in mid-December 2006 and early January 2007. She claimed she was coerced into sexual acts on several occasions during their marriage and molested while on sleep medications.

"Ken has been a sexual and emotional bully throughout our marriage, beginning on our honeymoon," she stated. "His behavior continues to stifle my well-being and safety."

The order sought for all protection rights, except allowing for contact through sending mail and other communication. Lori DeKleine indicated she wanted to prohibit her husband from purchasing or possessing a firearm, but noted: "I do not object to his use of a firearm while he is on duty at Holland Police Department."

The final straw that apparently led to the filing of the protection order was an episode during the last weekend of January 2007, while the couple was still living together.

"I believe Ken broke into the locked room I have been sleeping in to stay safe," she said. "I believe he broke in through the window in the room, leaving glass all over the bed and blood stains throughout the room and house."

Lori said her husband sorted through her personal belongings during the occurrence, including photocopying a card.

In a Feb. 5 motion to terminate the protection order, Ken DeKleine responded that the card was a love note from Lori's therapist, who was under investigation by the State Police. The termination request also said that Ken cut his finger and "may have left a drop or two of blood inadvertently — there was not blood throughout the house."

Lori DeKleine wrote that she found several recording devices in her backpack, on their home phone and under some clothing in their bedroom.

"The next week Ken told me I was 'under investigation,'" she stated.

Lori also wrote in the order that shortly after Ken returned February 2006 from Iraq, where he had been part of a group training Iraqi police, he became even more angry and controlling. One day, she said, he walked out

of their home "in a rage of anger," left his cell phone behind and was unreachable for 24 hours.

"I was afraid that he might harm himself or return and harm me," she wrote.

The initial incident that Lori DeKleine specified in the protection order was an unexpected visit in December 2006. She claimed Ken, his brother Keith, and a friend named Mike Dozeman came to the house, and Ken began reciting Lori's previous friendships and journal entries to discredit her in front of their two children.

"I was able to inform Mike and Keith of Ken's anger, control and manipulation throughout our marriage," she wrote. "I told them of the sexual abuse he submitted to as a 9 to 10 year old, and in early adulthood."

In another incident in early January 2007, Lori DeKleine said Ken came into her office at Holland Heights Church with two witnesses and "said he had to hear me say I wanted a divorce in front of other people (though I had already told him since Oct. 15, 2006, that I wanted a divorce)."

"So I said I wanted a divorce and he then said he would proceed with re-filing (for divorce) with his attorney because that is what I wanted," she added.

Ottawa County records indicate Ken DeKleine filed for divorce on Jan. 8, 2007. Meanwhile, a notice of the protection order was sent to Holland Police Department the day it was filed, court records show.

Terms of the divorce, mostly concerning child custody, kept the case open through the end of the year. The original terms called for joint custody of the children, but Lori did not want to oblige, which sent the case to the county Friend of the Court for a ruling.

By this point, court records show, the DeKleine children wanted nothing to do with their father.

"Give us the house, do not attempt full custody, or even 50/50," wrote his then-17-year-old daughter in a letter dated Oct. 16, 2007, "and know that I may never forgive you, nor might I ever respect you again."

Police say Holland officer confessed; Ken DeKleine charged with open murder in wife's death

Tue, Jan 15, 2008

BY MEGAN SCHMIDT AND ANDREA GOODELL
[Holland Sentinel Writers](#)

HOLLAND — Lori DeKleine's death was initially reported as a suicide, but investigators were already gathering evidence contrary to that as soon as they arrived, court records revealed Monday.



Although her death Thursday was reported within Holland, the investigation was quickly turned over to the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department because Lori DeKleine was married to veteran Holland Police Officer Ken DeKleine.

On Friday, after DeKleine was informed of his right to remain silent, he admitted to investigators he had killed his 43-year-old wife, court records show.

DeKleine, 44, was arraigned Monday afternoon in Holland District Court on an open murder charge. He remains jailed without bond.

DeKleine told investigators on Friday that he had strangled his wife with a nylon strap in the kitchen at their home, according to court records. DeKleine then took his wife's body into the home's basement where he attempted to make her death appear to be a suicide, records show.

Those records show DeKleine gave the following description of events: DeKleine had surreptitiously got into the house — the two had been separated and he was living elsewhere — where he waited until his two children had left and Lori was alone. DeKleine then went into the kitchen where he choked his wife with a nylon strap until she fell to the floor dead.

Although DeKleine attempted to make it appear that his wife had committed suicide, investigators found blood inside the house that they believe will turn out to be Ken DeKleine's, court records show.

"He claims that he was bitten on his lip by (Lori) prior to the homicide, and this was substantiated by six sutures on (his) lip that was noted during the investigation ...," Ottawa County Sheriff's Lt. Mark Bennett told a magistrate Saturday when requesting a warrant to charge DeKleine.

After DeKleine was arrested Friday night, Holland Police Chief John Kruithoff said he called the entire department together to inform everyone.

"That was very, very difficult — very emotional," Kruithoff said Monday.

The city police department knew about the marital problems in the DeKleine family, as well as the personal protection order that was granted to Lori DeKleine a year ago, Kruithoff said.

The order said DeKleine was not allowed to contact his wife or to be near the house they once shared, Kruithoff said.

"Other than that, there were no other conditions. He could do his job," Kruithoff said. "It's all up to the judge."

Thomas Elwood, who identified himself as a friend of Ken DeKleine's from Holland Heights Christian Reformed Church, said he felt compelled to attend Monday's arraignment because the allegations are so shocking.

"I was struck by the irony of it, because of how many people he's had to arrest," he said. "To have it turned around with him being there before the judge, I can't even understand how it happened."

THE DAILY Reporter

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Dental clinic still in the works for Branch County

[Print Page](#)

By Roland Stoy-Staff writer

COLDWATER — A county dental clinic that would primarily serve Medicaid patients is still in the works for Branch County, Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph District Health Department Director Steve Todd said Tuesday.

The proposed clinic was among the items listed in the county house committee report on Monday looking back on 2007 and ahead to this year.

In the rear-view mirror, County Administrator Bud Norman noted such items as enhanced courthouse security, animal control upgrades, building maintenance prioritization, energy audits and the outsourcing of IT responsibility.

Some of the items that came up in 2007 and will be on the table this year will be the Brownfields assessment grants, the Farmland and Open Space Ordinance and a dispute over the water level at Blossom Lake.

The Brownfield assessment grants, at \$400,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), may result in as much as \$500,000 in new revenue for the county.

"We will monitor and support the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Ordinance," said Norman. "We understand that we may have to address more issues and concerns with the Blossom Lake level."

A lower lake level due to dam adjustments has led a group of property owners there to seek established levels, which will have to be done through the legal system.

The county capital outlay requests for 2008 exceed available funding, said Norman, and a prioritization review board will be tasked with what will be on the shopping list and what will not.

As for the dental clinic, one such facility opened Jan. 7 in Three Rivers, and Todd said it is open to people from Branch and Hillsdale counties as well.

"We have the goal of one in each location," he said, as other organizations to partner with are sought.

Last year, Gerald Chase, of Northstar Management and Consulting, assured commissioners the architect and the loan for construction for the Michigan Community Dental Clinics would be secured with no recourse to the county.

Todd said locations are being explored, with the county campus on Marshall Road and the Branch County Community Health Center campus as possibilities.

"It is going slow . . . We want to make sure the facility when it opens will operate as planned, without any burden to local taxpayers," he said.

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Ann Arbor News

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Free dental work for kids

The University of Michigan School of Dentistry will work on children in need on Feb. 2 for free. Registration is mandatory and happens at 9 a.m. in person to be appointed a specific time. It's at the U-M School of Dentistry, third floor, 1011 N. University Ave. in Ann Arbor. The services may include: cleanings; limited x-rays; sealants; fillings; extractions. One hundred children between the ages of 5-12, accompanied by a parent or guardian will be seen. Call 734-763-6933 for more details.

Tanks gone, but the work rolls on

Awards recognize Focus: HOPE cofounder's dedication to Detroit

January 16, 2008

By SHARON GITTLEMAN

FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

Once upon a time, Eleanor Josaitis spent the bulk of her time caring for her five young children in her suburban Detroit home.

Then tanks started rolling down the streets of Detroit.

Advertisement

It was the summer of 1967.

"We said, 'We'd better do something,' " said Josaitis.

"We" was Josaitis and Father William Cunningham, who was then a pastor at her church in Taylor.

What they did was found Focus: HOPE, an organization devoted to overcoming racism, poverty and injustice. The group, entering its 40th year, feeds 43,000 people each month, providing meals to mothers, children and elderly people. It also offers training programs, helping people gain skills they need to get jobs in industries ranging from engineering to those involving computers.

Josaitis recently was honored for her efforts by Northwood University in Midland, which named her one of its eight Distinguished Women Award winners. She, along with four other leaders known for their commitment to Detroit, received the inaugural Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards. The awards were named in honor of the late Free Press columnist, editor and publisher Neal Shine.

Josaitis insists there are still plenty of challenges.

"Sometimes, people get very discouraged and say, 'We can't solve it all,' " she said. "You do it one person at a time. You can't just look at the big picture and become intimidated. You look at the big picture and say, 'What part can I play in it?' "

That attitude caught the eye of Keith Pretty, 56, president of Northwood University.

"She's an inspiration to anyone who's ever met her," Pretty said of Josaitis, whom he met more than a decade ago.

"She's one of the most warm and genuine people you will ever find," he said. "She gave up a tranquil life and most of her material goods to build something in the city of Detroit."

The Distinguished Women Award is given to individuals who've accomplished extraordinary achievements and contributed to their community, the business world or volunteer and service agencies in the process.

Timashion Jones, 29, of Oak Park saw Josaitis' determination firsthand. He entered one of Focus: HOPE's

Tanks gone, but the work rolls on
educational/work programs when he lived in Detroit.

Josaitis is a doer, not a talker, he said.

"She's feisty," he said. "She doesn't play around."

Today, Jones is an engineer, a homeowner, a husband, a father and one of Josaitis' biggest fans.

"Her passion inspired me," he said. "I don't know how she did all the things she did."

For more information about Focus: HOPE, visit www.focushope.edu.

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U.S. Bucks Trend With Baby Boomlet

4.3M Births Highest In 45 Years

POSTED: 9:40 am EST January 16, 2008

Bucking the trend in many other wealthy industrialized nations, the United States seems to be experiencing a baby boomlet, reporting the largest number of children born in 45 years.

The nearly 4.3 million births in 2006 were mostly due to a bigger population, especially a growing number of Hispanics. That group accounted for nearly one-quarter of all U.S. births. But non-Hispanic white women and other racial and ethnic groups were having more babies, too.

An Associated Press review of birth numbers dating to 1909 found the total number of U.S. births was the highest since 1961, near the end of the baby boom. An examination of global data also shows that the United States has a higher fertility rate than every country in continental Europe, as well as Australia, Canada and Japan. Fertility levels in those countries have been lower than the U.S. rate for several years, although some are on the rise, most notably in France.

Experts believe there is a mix of reasons: a decline in contraceptive use, a drop in access to abortion, poor education and poverty.

There are cultural reasons as well. Hispanics as a group have higher fertility rates - about 40 percent higher than the U.S. overall. And experts say Americans, especially those in middle America, view children more favorably than people in many other Westernized countries.

"Americans like children. We are the only people who respond to prosperity by saying, 'Let's have another kid,'" said Nan Marie Astone, associate professor of population, family and reproductive health at Johns Hopkins University.

Demographers say it is too soon to know if the sudden increase in births is the start of a trend.

"We have to wait and see. For now, I would call it a noticeable blip," said Brady Hamilton, a statistician with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Demographers often use the word boomlet for a small and brief baby boom.

To many economists and policymakers, the increase in births is good news. The U.S. fertility rate -- the number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime -- reached 2.1. That's the "magic number" required for a population to replace itself.

Countries with much lower rates -- such as Japan and Italy, both with a rate of 1.3 -- face future labor shortages and eroding tax bases as they fail to reproduce enough to take care of their aging elders.

But the higher fertility rate isn't all good. Last month, the CDC reported that America's teen birth rate rose for the first time in 15 years.

The same report also showed births becoming more common in nearly every age and racial or ethnic group. Birth rates increased for women in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, not just teens. They rose for whites, blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Alaska Natives. The rate for Asian women stayed about the same.

Total births jumped 3 percent in 2006, the largest single-year increase since 1989, according to the CDC's preliminary data.

Clearly, U.S. birth rates are not what they were in the 1950s and early 1960s, when they were nearly twice as high and large families were much more common. The recent birth numbers are more a result of many women having a couple of kids each, rather than a smaller number of mothers, each bearing several children, Astone said.

Demographers say there has been at least one boomlet before, around 1990, when annual U.S. births broke 4.1 million for two straight years before dropping to about 3.9 million in the mid-1990s. Adolescent childbearing was up at the time, but so were births among other

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groups, and experts aren't sure what explained that bump.

The 2006 fertility rate of 2.1 children is the highest level since 1971. To be sure, the fertility rate among Hispanics -- 3 children per woman -- has been a major contributor. That's the highest rate for any group. In 2006, for the first time, Hispanics accounted for more than 1 million births.

The high rate probably reflects cultural attitudes toward childbirth developed in other countries, experts said. Fertility rates average 2.7 in Central America and 2.4 in South America.

Fertility rates often rise among immigrants who leave their homelands for a better life. For example, the rate among Mexican-born women in the U.S. is 3.2, but the overall rate for Mexico is just 2.4, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, a Washington-based research organization.

"They're more optimistic about their future here," said Jeff Passel, a Pew Center demographer.

Some complain that many illegal immigrants come here purposely to have children.

"The child is an automatic American citizen, thus entitled to all benefits of American citizens. This gives a certain financial incentive for people coming from other countries illegally to have children here," said John Vinson, president of the Virginia-based American Immigration Control Foundation.

Fertility rates were also relatively high for other racial and ethnic groups. The rate rose to 2.1 for blacks and nearly 1.9 for non-Hispanic whites in 2006, according to the CDC.

Fertility levels tend to decline as women become better educated and gain career opportunities, and as they postpone childbirth until they are older. Experts say those factors, along with the legalization of abortion and the expansion of contraception options, explain why the U.S. fertility rate dropped to its lowest point -- about 1.7 -- in 1976.

But while fertility declines persisted in many other developed nations, the United States saw the reverse: The fertility rate climbed to 2 in 1989 and has hovered around that mark since then, according to federal birth data.

Hans-Peter Kohler, a University of Pennsylvania sociology professor, and others say the difference has more to do with culture than race. For example, white American women have more children than white European -- even though many nations in Europe have more family-friendly government policies on parental leave and child care.

But such policies are just one factor in creating a society that produces lots of babies, said Duke University's S. Philip Morgan, a leading fertility researcher.

Other factors include recent declines in contraceptive use here; limited access to abortion in some states; and a 24/7 economy that provides opportunities for mothers to return to work, he said.

Also, it is more common for American women to have babies out of wedlock and more common for couples here to go forward with unwanted pregnancies. And, compared with nations like Italy and Japan, it's more common for American husbands to help out with chores and child care.

There are regional variations in the United States. New England's fertility rates are more like Northern Europe's. American women in the Midwest, South and certain mountain states tend to have more children.

The influence of certain religions in those latter regions is an important factor, said Ron Lesthaeghe, a Belgian demographer who is a visiting professor at the University of Michigan. "Evangelical Protestantism and Mormons," he said.

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